



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Wildlife Division
PO Box 200701
Helena MT 59020-0701
March 9, 2012

Dear Interested Person:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is requesting public comment on the proposed Keep Cool Hills Hunting Access and Recreation Management Area Biennial Rule. This proposal was adopted for public review at the March 8, 2012 FWP Commission meeting and would extend for two years, through FWP Commission rule, a 15,000-acre Cooperative Management Area north of Lincoln that was established by FWP Commission rule in 2007. Sieben Ranch Company owns most of the land, with some parcels owned by the Montana Chapter of The Nature Conservancy; a portion is State Land, administered by the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. The Cooperative Management Area rules would provide for managed public access throughout the year. Prior to 2006, unmanaged public access resulted in significant resource damage to lands in this area, causing affected landowners to consider closing the area to public access.

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks and the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission proposes the following rules and regulations to govern recreational use within the designated Keep Cool Hills Hunting Access and Recreation Management Area in Lewis and Clark County for the purpose of gaining hunting access and recreational privileges on private land, to prevent vehicular damage to soils and vegetation, and to avoid excessive disturbance to native wildlife including threatened and endangered species.

This Rule would be effective from 4/12/12 to 4/11/14. Because the public enjoyment of the recreational facilities of these lands necessitates rules, regulations and enforcement, the provisions of 23-1-106 and 87-1-303 M.C.A. apply. It is therefore proposed that it shall be unlawful for any person to:

1. Drive any motorized wheeled-vehicle in the above-described area except on county roads, on private roads designated open for motorized travel, or in designated parking and camping areas as posted. Landowners and/or their designee in the course of administrative work, and federal, state, and county officials in the course of their official duties will be exempt from these vehicular restrictions.
2. Park any vehicle in such a manner as to obstruct traffic or block any gate.
3. Trespass, hunt, or discharge a firearm within areas posted as safety zones. Target shooting and discharge of firearms is prohibited on Sieben Ranch Company land from June 1 through August 31, annually.
4. Remain in the above-described area when ordered to leave for cause by a landowner or law enforcement officer.
5. Camp on Sieben Ranch Company or The Nature Conservancy land except in designed areas as posted. Camping on DNRC land is allowed within 200 feet of customary access points, but limited to 7 days.

6. Disturb, harass or otherwise interfere with livestock.
7. Operate a snowmobile in the above-described area between April 2 and November 30. Snowmobile use is allowed seasonally from December 1 through April 1, and shall be restricted to designated trails.
8. Conduct commercial outfitting or guiding of hunters or fisherman in the above-described area.

COMMENT PERIOD DEADLINE

The deadline for public comment on proposed Keep Cool Hills Hunting Access and Recreation Management Area Biennial Rule is **5:00 PM Monday, April 9, 2012**. Final adoption on this item will be made at the April 12, 2012 FWP Commission meeting.

TO MAKE COMMENT

For further clarification, you may call the Wildlife Bureau office at 406-444-2612. To submit comments electronically, this letter with the imbedded links below can be found under “Opportunity for Public Comment” on the Hunting home page at the fwp.mt.gov website. Written comments can be sent to: FWP – Wildlife Bureau, Attn: Public Comment, POB 200701, Helena MT 59620-0701. Please note comment deadlines.

Keep Cool Hills Hunting Access and Recreation Management Area Biennial Rule – Proposed
(*The deadline for public comment on this item is **5:00 PM Monday, April 9, 2012**.*)

<http://fwp.mt.gov/hunting/publicComments/keepCoolHills.html>